

*Nothing is politically right
that is morally wrong.*



*Free and fair discussion
is the firmest friend of truth.*

MISSOURI SENATE
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Senate Sends Bill Making Sure Gaming Money Goes to Classrooms to the Governor

Bill Would Also Expand Virtual Classrooms, Teacher Standards

JEFFERSON CITY, MO – New gaming money derived from the passage of Proposition A last November by Missouri voters will go to students in Missouri classrooms as intended thanks to a sweeping education bill the Missouri Senate sent to the governor today by a vote of 29 to 3. Senate Leader Charlie Shields, R-St. Joseph, sponsored [Senate Bill 291](#) to fix an error in the proposition language. Lawmakers voted to have the gaming funds generated from the removal of loss limits deposited into the Classroom Trust Fund and distributed to school districts through the fund. The fix will mean an additional \$60 million for Missouri classrooms in the fiscal year that begins July 1.

“The Classroom Trust Fund is a proven method for making sure gaming funding that is supposed to go to our students in our classrooms gets there,” Shields said. “By running the additional money generated by the removal of loss limits through this proven fund, we are ensuring our students will see those dollars as intended by the people when they voted last November.”

The measure also expands virtual classrooms for use by Missouri school district students and charter school students for any grade. The bill also guarantees private, parochial, and home schools students will be able to participate in virtual courses offered in the school districts where they live. Shields said the bill provides funding for school districts and charter schools to create virtual school programs, building on the state’s current [virtual school](#).

“By funding these virtual classes like normal classes, we give districts, and more importantly, students flexibility,” he said. “That flexibility means they will be able to take more classes when it is most convenient for them, plus it will mean a wider range of classes will be available to students.”

The Senate also endorsed the bipartisan idea that teachers have performance standards.

“Our students have performance standards and it is important we have quality teachers to make sure Missouri’s future workforce is the most educated in the nation – even the world.”

School districts are required to develop the standards by June 30, 2010. The standards should include that teachers use forms of assessment to monitor and manage learning, be prepared and knowledgeable of content, keep students focused, professionally communicate with the community, keep current on instructional knowledge and act as a responsible professional.

The bill also includes a new voluntary merit pay program teachers in St. Louis City’s school district can choose to enroll in to obtain higher pay rather than tenure.

A “parents’ bill of rights” provision makes sure every district informs parents of children requiring an individualized education program of their educational rights. Plus, school districts will have the flexibility to move to a four-day school week, and districts hammered by inclement weather will now only have to make-up a total of ten school days, regardless of how many days were cancelled.

An emergency clause was adopted for many provisions of the bill, including the fix to the gaming funding, meaning those sections will take effect upon the governor’s signature. The bill now moves to the governor’s desk for his consideration.

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